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Articles

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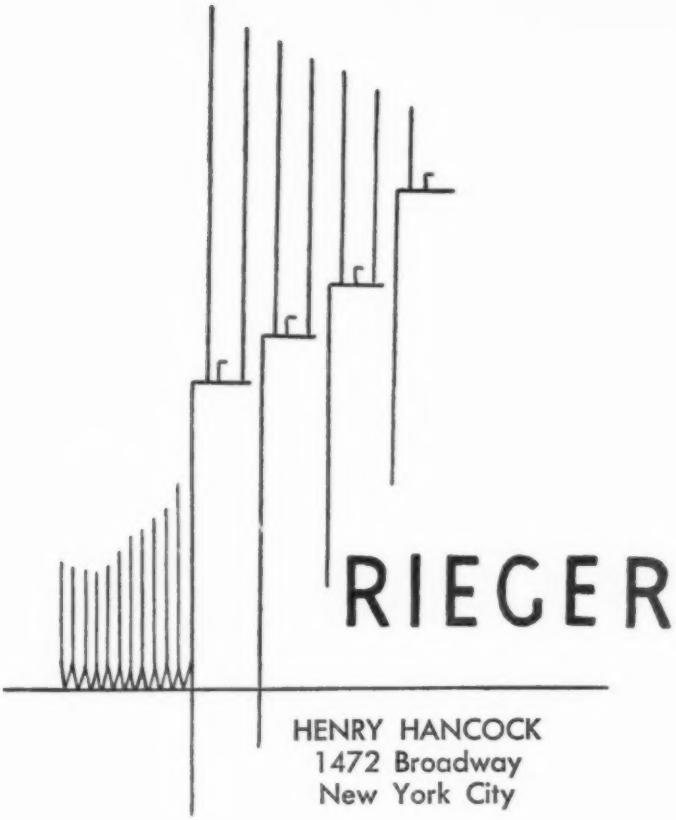

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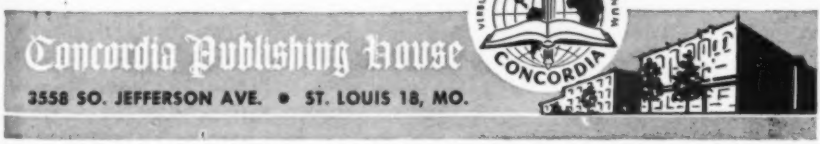

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My View of Organ Building Today

M. A. Vente

The building of good organs prior to 1850 showed the extent of the activity and the province of the organ builder. It was entirely in the nature of an artcraft. This artcraft claimed the organ builder's entire attention for every individual organ. There was no "production" line. It was all individual. Immediately after the middle of the last century, and especially after 1890, the organ "industry" came to The Netherlands (in Germany, England, and France it had come earlier); all was over. The organ builder became a businessman first, who had to meet the competition; and it was no longer possible to give the same care and attention to individual instruments as the earlier builders had done. Too often the organ builder became a mere assembler of parts mass-produced in a specialty mill and put together in the shop of the organ "builder." No real professional knowledge of organ building was necessary. In addition, the disappearance of the old handicraft was a great loss.

It is no wonder that, in the long run, many would not be content with these assembled organs. The only difference between organs, at least in the worst period, was a difference in size. There were no character differences, because these organs had no character.

There then developed a longing for the color-richness of the old organs, of which several hundred specimens still existed in The Netherlands. At first, people thought that the secret of the beauty of the old organs had been lost; but through long, careful research they came to the discovery that, although it was difficult to approach the beauty of the old organs, it was not an impossibility nor an unattainable ideal.

The reasons for the uncontested beauty of the old, that is to say, 17th-, 18th-, and very early 19th-century organs, are many. Some have assumed, in bold enthusiasm, that the application of any of the many means could accomplish the desired result. I should like to mention here a few examples: A so-called "classic" specification with many mutations and mixtures does not mean that a good organ will result. (Sometimes it is a little better than an assembled organ; sometimes it is worse.) The application of mechanical action, however important it may be, together with an over-richness in tonal resources, does not produce even an "old" organ. Low wind pressure is very useful, but without good voicing it is no gain. It must be understood that the first organs of the so-called "Reform" contained alterations, but still did not bring any definite improvements. Gradually the infantile paralysis of organ building, however, was conquered; and one can state that in recent years much really appreciable progress has been made.

Difficulties are many: insufficient funds, bad acoustic conditions in the new, usually too small churches, understandable conservatism, which sometimes likes to preserve the little shrines of the high romantic period, inexpert advice, and so on. I should like at this time to explain which factors *can* ensure a really good instrument.

A. Specification

In the specification of an organ one has relatively great freedom, provided one holds to some basic principles.

1. There must be a perfect balance between foundation tone and upper work. This balance cannot be determined mathematically, and in this matter the insight and taste of the expert will play a decisive part.

2. An organ must not be as large as possible but always as *small* as possible, taking into consideration the acoustics, the cubic space of the church, and the seating capacity. Even in large churches it is not necessary to have comparably large organs. The small size must be compensated by the highest possible quality of all the parts and especially of the voicing.

3. The pipework must be as varied as possible, so as to develop character. For instance, a Gemshorn 4′ and a Gemshorn 2′ on the same manual duplicate each other.

4. The stops of a Principal family must form the skeleton of every manual and of the Pedal.

5. The reed tones must give luster to the full tone of every manual, but also must be useful separately as solo voices, with the exception of the 16′ reedwork in the Pedal.

6. The manuals must each have a specified character of their own, so that they complement each other; and together they must form a brilliant but certainly not too loud or earsplitting so-called "full organ." The divisions must be standing one above the other, not next or behind each other. Only the Pedal may be situated in two halves on either side of the manual chests. The divisions must each have their own case, which must be as small as possible. The sound then blends excellently, and the character of every division is more pronounced.

B. Wind Chests

The ideal wind chest, as determined experimentally, is the slide chest. After the tone of a pipe has fully developed, it is a matter of indifference if the chest is a slide chest or a cone chest, electric or electro-pneumatic. But at the exact moment of attack, the beginning of the tone will be influenced favorably through the slide chest, with note channels. With careful construction the tone does not fluctuate; and another very important advantage is that, through the communal provision of wind to the pipes of each note, the sound is blended beautifully. One assumed objection of the slide chest is that central heating works destructively in any building. This objection is applicable to all chest systems, to some perhaps more than to others. In The Netherlands, however, one actually finds an improved type of slide chest that is not influenced by strong heating and by rapid evaporation; and it has been protected by a patent.

C. Action

For the key action, tracker action is far preferable to electro-pneumatic or pure electrical action. With tracker action the organist has close contact with his instrument. He himself opens the valves. With a perfect layout of the key action, the touch does not have to be heavy. And, moreover, any organist becomes, after some practice, familiar with this action; and he would not then wish it otherwise. With large instruments it is possible to apply pneumatic or electric couplers. The stop action can be purely mechanical when used with small instruments. With larger instruments the electro-pneumatic slide chest is ideal, because of the fact that the valuable accessory of free combinations can then be utilized.

D. Wind Pressure

The wind pressure must be low and definitely not higher than 3¼ inches; for the reed pipes the best pressure is between 2½ and 3 inches.

E. Pipework

Though I do not want to name in this article any names of Dutch organ builders, I want to mention, as an exception, the name of one pipe maker, the firm of Jacq. Stinkens, at Zeist, Netherlands. The Stinkens family are not organ builders but only pipe manufacturers, though I must say immediately that various good organ builders in The Netherlands themselves can make their own pipes. The method of the Stinkens family, which has an experience of many decades, is of its very nature evolved out of the romantic style to the modern style, but grounded in ancient tradition. In my practice, I feel that the safest way is to compare my own ideas of the construction of organ pipes with the experience of the firm of Stinkens, whose work also is not unknown in the United States.

1. Flues

In the romantic period of organ building, one preferred the pipework that put the emphasis on the foundation tone. The pipes, therefore, had a small toe opening, a relatively wide windway, a sloping front to the languid; and in that front side many languid nicks were placed. The narrow toe opening resulted in an appreciable reduction in the pressure of the air in the foot of the pipe, so that the wind pressure at the languid was somewhat lower than in the wind chest. If a strong tone was desired, it was necessary to increase the wind pressure in the chest. This high wind pressure then resulted in stops which blended less well, tone that was too strong, and small pipes that were too predominant. The effect of this was that the mixtures and mutations were condemned as too loud and for that reason were avoided as much as possible. With the pipe construction in the ancient manner everything is done differently, even in the opposite way. The toe opening is usually wide, the windway is narrow, and the front of the languid is nearly vertical. Because of these factors, there is no pressure reduction in the foot of the pipe; and the pressure near the languid is only very little lower than in the wind chest itself. The wind pressure in the chest may therefore be low.

By means of the narrow windway, the force of the tone is subdued, so

that the "baroque" pipework has a soft tone. More especially, it blends very well. The voicing of real baroque pipework is appreciably softer than that of the romantic period; yet even in a similar specification an organ in real baroque style sounds stronger than an organ with a baroque specification with the pipework made and voiced according to the romantic principles. This is true because in the baroque voicing special attention is given to the character of each register, much more than to the uniformity of strength in each register. Many feel the slightly slow speech of baroque pipework to be a great objection. Indeed, it is granted that, because of the relatively low wind pressure and the narrow windway, the speech is slower than in romantic organs. However, is not the slow speech — provided one can hear it undisturbed by annoying concomitant noises — one of the charms of the old organ tone?

2. Reeds

Also with the reed voices one can describe an analogous development from the romantic to the modern-classic period. In the romantic organ building, the ground tones had to dominate the reed voices, in The Netherlands as well as in England and Germany. The Cavaillé-Coll organ in France in its best form sometimes had reeds rich in overtones. The dark tone and color of the romantic reeds was produced by wide, long shallots and thick, inelastic tongues, which were leathered. The most terrible excesses were encountered in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where special high wind pressure was frequently applied to the reeds. Now, it may be possible that such reed batteries yield a fantastic sound; but these high-pressure reeds have nothing in common with real organ tone. As a principle, one must accept an equal pressure for the reeds and the labial stops, fed out of the same channel, the pressure preferably not higher than 2¾ inches. Here, also, it is in these times desirable to strive for emphasis on overtones. This result can be accomplished by making the shallots relatively short, the reeds thin, and *not* leathered. At the same time, the resonators should be made with metal approximately 30 per cent tin.

The reed tongues must be relatively wide and elastic, and have to be exactly proportioned to the wind pressure and the diameter of the shallot. The bending of the reed is a question of individual taste and must be developed experimentally. One of the objections frequently brought forward against the baroque reeds is that they are so easily put out of tune. If he is good, the organ builder will tune the reeds many times after the completion of the instrument. Eventually, the reeds will become firmer of tone and pitch, and will then hold a good tuning indefinitely.

Besides, the real tuning of the reeds has to be done in the church itself; this is even more true for reeds than for labial pipes.

One must not think, especially the reader of this article, that in The Netherlands the principles of what you have been reading above are being applied everywhere faithfully. Nothing is more difficult than to bring a cultural possession and a slowly grown technique out of former ages into our modern world — to make ourselves acquainted with it and to make it

our own. Moreover — and this is of special significance, in my opinion — one should not look for his own field, his own strength, in copying the old organs. If the modern organ builder is not looking for his own principal strength in the future, then he is doomed. Naturally, one has to take out of the old times the essentials, especially those things which gave the old organ its superior character. Never go half-way — something which has also been tried in The Netherlands. It brings about an organ which is neither fish nor fowl. The most essential factors, in addition to the important basic principles for building a real classical organ, are a good, expertly drawn plan and specially drawn specifications and scales for each individual instrument.

Do not ask any organ builder to give me an estimate for building and installing an organ! It is only the money and the time that can be given to it that count, in such a case.

I only know the American organ from records, so I am not entitled to give a definite opinion. It seems to me that, on paper, they have, in the U.S.A., beautiful baroque specifications, but the qualities and the tones of their pipes are mostly romantic. It was very difficult even for the organ builder in The Netherlands, with its hundreds of old organs prior to 1850, to build a good organ; it must be the more difficult in America, without any tradition as it is, to find a real tone. I therefore hope and pray (without any Europeanism) that organ builders today in the U.S.A. will come to Germany, The Netherlands, and France, to listen to the instruments which from the past have told us how to build organs. Only then will it be possible to have a real evolution in the New World. I shall myself be glad to give advice to the Americans in examining, and especially listening to, the perfect examples of organ building in The Netherlands and elsewhere.

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Redesigning the Old Organ

By Thomas W. Byers

Organ salesmen sometimes use the expression, "everything-new-but-the-pipes!" to indicate the ultimate in a rebuilding operation. It is easy to understand the persistence of this fallacy, because new wind chests and a bright new console are the kind of things a music committee can come to grips with, while the appreciation of music is an intangible and highly subjective affair. Many organ technicians do an excellent mechanical rebuilding job; but the musical developments of the past decade or two have, with few exceptions, failed to claim the attention of organ rebuilders. Here are some suggestions for making the rebuilding operation a worth-while musical project.

The basic premise which must underlie any rebuilding project is this: *The rebuilt organ is subject to the same musical principles as an entirely new instrument.* The success of your rebuild will be proportional to the extent to which the correct principles are observed, within the limitations of (1) your budget and (2) the imagination and skill of your organ technician. Avoid spreading your budget too thinly; compromise extent rather than quality. You will be able to get more music out of 6 good stops than you will get out of 12 releathered action mechanisms supplying 12 coarsely voiced old stops. A modern organ with tracker action (perhaps with electro-pneumatic pedal action and an AGO pedal keyboard) is more fun to play than its stodgy predecessor fitted out with a new console complete with sub- and super-couplers. We believe that electrification can be of great value, but if you buy *nothing* but electrification, you've bought the wrong thing!

The background of organ design has been ably discussed elsewhere in the pages of the Organ Institute Quarterly; let us now look at some of the elements of design in the down-to-earth terms of the rebuilt organ.

LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT

The resonant effect of the full Swell, and the potentialities of dynamic shading available in a legitimately enclosed division do not establish precedent or provide an excuse for bottling up the Great, Pedal, and "unenclosed" Positiv. The free-standing location, with completely exposed pipework, is the *only* 100-per-cent effective treatment for these divisions; and any other treatment, albeit necessary, must be acknowledged as a compromise, and the compromise must be kept to a minimum. Where display pipes are used, make them natural-length speaking pipes, widely spaced, and with ample space above the tops of the pipes. Tapered pipes in natural zinc make good speaking fronts, because of the extra space given by the tapered scale. (See photo on page 20, Organ Institute Quarterly, Spring, 1952.)

The organ should never be removed from a good location, in a gallery or elsewhere, to chambers. If the organ is in chambers and must stay there, reduce grill and casework to a minimum, and use only the thinnest cloth possible, if anyone insists on concealing the organ. The writer has seen only one church in which the choir sits in a room separate from the main auditorium, concealed by a heavy curtain. Someone asked, "If you believe we should see the organ pipes, why not remove automobile hoods so we can see the engine?" No doubt we would, if spark plugs were half as interesting to look at as organ pipes!

STOPLIST

Each ensemble of the organ is a self-contained entity compounded of elements which are matched to each other. The classic ensemble can not be attained simply by adding new mixture work to a disparate assortment of existing 8′ and 4′ stops. Many old 8′ diapasons and flutes are beautiful voices by themselves, but are not the kind of sound which can serve as the pitch line of a mixture ensemble. Few 4′ Octaves or "principals" outside of contemporary classic examples remotely resemble a "singing line."

"The mixtures are the organ"; and the 8′, 4′, and 2′ stops are the foundation on which the organ rests. Each division must, therefore, contain at least one stop at each of these pitches which can be used in the ensemble. Extra stops which may be of interest in themselves but which do not fit into the ensemble may be left out when the full ensemble is played. In most organs built between c. 1910 and c. 1940 there are very few pipes which will be adaptable to a modern plan; in such cases completely new pipework must be provided for the major ensembles. In older organs, existing pipes can be rescaled, revoiced, or otherwise adapted. In any event, regard the old organ only as a supply of ready-made pipes to be used to best advantage in the rebuilt organ. Forget the names and former placement of the old stops; consider only the structure and adaptability of each set of pipes.

Let us now examine some practical examples of "organ restyling," given in stoplist form.

(1) The Great Organ of a 27-stop 3-manual in a Methodist church, originally built in 1927. It is intended eventually to redesign the entire organ. It was necessary to use all new pipework for the Great ensemble, hence the other divisions must be done at some later date.

THE OLD GREAT: 16′ Bourdon (from Pedal); 8′ Diapason I; 8′ Diapason II; 8′ Clarabella; 4′ Octave; 8′ Tromba.

THE NEW GREAT: 8′ Spitzprinzipal
8′ Bourdon (metal)
4′ Octave
2 2-3′ Quinte
2′ Superoctave
IV Plein-jeu (19-22-26-29 at CC)

NEW MATERIALS USED: All new pipes; new wind chest for Plein-jeu.

(2) The Swell fluework of a 36-stop 3-manual in a college chapel, originally built in 1938. Funds permitted the addition of 2 new stops to the Swell, the other stops to be modified to make a classic flue ensemble.

THE OLD SWELL: 16′ Bourdon; 8′ Diapason; 8′ Rohrflote; 8′ Salicional; 8′ Voix Celeste; 8′ Aeoline; 4′ Octave; 4′ Flauto Traverso; 2′ Flautino; III Rank Mixture; 8′ Cornopean; 8′ Oboe.

THE NEW SWELL: 16′ Bourdon
8′ Rohrflote
8′ Viole-de-gambe (new)
8′ Voix Celeste (made from old Salicional and Celeste pipes rescaled 2 to 8 pipes larger, most beards removed, revoiced.)
4′ Octave (old Octave softened to eliminate stridence)
4′ Flauto Traverso
2 2-3′ Nasard (old Echo 4′ Chimney Flute)
2′ Blockflöte (new, large scale)
1 3-5′ Tierce (old Flautino rescaled 4 to 7 pipes larger)
III Rk. Scharff (22-26-29 at CC)
(rearrangement of old Mixture pipes, rescaled 5 to 8 pipes larger, with old Diapason top-octave pipes used where additional small pipes were necessary)
8′ Trumpet (old Great Trumpet)
4′ Oboe Clarion (old Oboe)

The reeds are only a temporary adaptation. If old reeds are to give satisfying results in a modern plan, they must be revoiced with new shallots (parallel for chorus reeds) and thin, unweighted tongues.

(3) An 18-stop 2-manual tracker organ in a Lutheran church. New pedal chests were required, and funds were available for one new stop.

THE OLD ORGAN: Pedal: 16′ Diapason; 16′ Lieblich Gedackt (Swell); 8′ Violoncello. Great: 8′ Diapason; 8′ Melodia; 8′ Gamba; 8′ Dulciana; 4′ Octave; 4′ Flute d'Amour; 2′ Fifteenth Swell: 16′ Bourdon; 8′ Diapason (capped bass); 8′ Stopped Diapason: 8′ Salicional; 8′ Aeoline; 8′ Voix celeste; 4′ Violina; 4′ Flute Harmonique; 8′ Oboe Gamba (flue pipes).

THE REBUILT ORGAN:

Pedal: 16′ Diapason
16′ Gedackt (old Swell 16′)
8′ Octave (old Great Diapason)
8′ Gedackt (from 16′)
5 1-3′ Quinte (from Octave)
4′ Superoctave (from Octave)

Great: 8′ Spitzprinzipal (new; case pipes; natural zinc finish)
8′ Melodia (upper end brightened)
8′ Gamba (softened, for milder quality)
8′ Dulciana

4′ Octave (old Octave rescaled 2 to 7 pipes larger)
2 2-3′ Quinte (old Swell Diapason, new trebles)
2″ Superoctave (old Fifteenth, rescaled 4 to 8 pipes larger)

Swell: 8′ Stopped Diapason (upper end brightened)
8′ Salicional
8′ Aeoline
8′ Voix Celeste
4′ Flute Harmonique
2 2-3′ Nasard (old Great Flute d'Amour, rescaled 1 pipe larger.)
2′ Octavin (2′ flute made by rescaling Oboe Gamba pipes 18 to 20 pipes larger, removing beards, revoicing. The 8′ GG pipe became 2′C)
1 3-5′ Tierce (Made from 4′ Violina pipes, by rescaling 17 to 20 pipes larger, removing beards, revoicing. The 4′ C pipe became 1 3-5′ E.

Pedal action is electro-pneumatic, played from existing 30-note pedal keyboard.

The three foregoing stoplists give in condensed form the details of stoplist modernization in three representative organs, within technical and budgetary limitations. All three stoplists show (1) selection of mild 8′ stops which can blend with their 4′ singing lines and upper pitches; (2) broadening of the 4′ and 2′ foundations and upperwork; (3) more efficient use of certain stops as rescaled and revoiced for use in the new plan; (4) avoidance of unessential duplications of similar stops at the same pitch.

It is common knowledge that old materials, particularly wind chests and pipes, may be utilized successfully in rebuilding operations. It is now hoped that organ rebuilders will increasingly turn their efforts towards the musical phases of their craft; and that organists will lend their support to those rebuilders who regard the organ not only as a machine to be put in working order, but as a musical instrument to be redesigned to meet the requirements of our advancing musical concepts.

Ornaments in Bach's "O Mensch, Bewein Dein Sünde Gross"

KLAUS SPEER

Since the results of such authoritative studies as those by Ralph Kirkpatrick (Introduction to his edition of the "Goldberg Variations," G. Schirmer, New York) and Putnam Aldrich ("Ornamentation in J. S. Bach's Organ Works," New York 1950)* have been available for some time, the reader is entitled to be informed immediately that the present little study will not proclaim any additional objective facts. Rather it will attempt to offer reasons for the specific manner of execution for each of the many ornaments in "O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross" at which this player has arrived. Such detailed analysis may appear pedantic when its results are presented with the apparent finality of the printed page. The essential substance of the following lines is not the individual results for each case but the method employed to arrive at them. For this method we are indebted to Kirkpatrick. "What makes a performer convincing is always the illusion of spontaneous — in this sense, improvisatory — expression he is able to create." (Arthur Mendel, edition of J. S. Bach's "The Passion According to St. John," G. Schirmer, New York. Introd., page XXII). One could not attempt to express in notes or other signs the slight rubato that practically every trill needs, from a slow beginning to the fastest speed in the middle, to a slight ritardando again at the end. The execution of this controlled freedom is probably the main factor that produces the effect of spontaneity.

Our organ chorale in the version of the Peters edition (and the for all practical purposes identical versions of Bach Gesellschaft, Baerenreiter, and Ditson) shows the mordent sign in a number of places. One can follow Putnam Aldrich's suggestion that the mordent may basically have two functions — either the generally accepted one of accenting, or a melodic one — but one need not agree with some of his ensuing arguments. This writer appreciates the idea of the possible melodic function of the mordent; but he is inclined to agree with Arthur Mendel's review (*Musical Quarterly*, XXXVII 2), which proves that Aldrich has drawn some unwarranted conclusions from the basic idea. It would seem that the mordents in bars 1, 11, 12, and 17, which appear on 8th notes, permit a melodic interpretation, i.e. execution in 32nd note values. To play more than one turn seems advisable or desirable only in bar 12 where the mordent appears on a quarter note. Execution in 16th notes is feasible here; but one or two turns in 32nd notes make for greater harmonic interest with E flat sounding against F in the

*Aldrich's larger study of which the one cited above is an excerpt has been announced for some time by the same publisher, Coleman-Ross, but has not been available as yet to this writer.

alto as well as D in the bass, while 16th note execution would produce consonant sixths between soprano and alto.

No distinction is apparent in the employment of the three signs for the trill, "long" or "short" and *tr*. We find all three signs on cadence trills with written-out terminations. Both the short sign and *tr* are found in places where a long trill seems called for and where no termination is given by the composer (bar 21 and bar 3 respectively). Where the context makes it clear that no more than three quickly executed 32nd or 64th notes can be expected, we find the short trill employed consistently. These particular trills offer the least possibility for variety in interpretation. In bar 4 the sign appears above a 32nd note, in bars 7, 9 (twice), 11, 12, 15, 16 (twice), on 16th notes.

The terminations of the many trills on dotted 8th notes all have 16th value, i.e. either one 16th or two 32nds. This would, on first thought, suggest execution of all these trills with 32nd notes. But such uniformity would rob the music of one of the main characteristics that derive from ornaments, that of spontaneity and variety. Thus it seems to heighten the rhythmic interest of the music to use 64th notes for the trills proper as against the many 32nd notes written out in the treble of the composition. Also it will be best to stop the oscillations on almost all of them somewhere before the written-out termination. Exactly where this stop can take place must be determined by the context from case to case. That the method of stopping a trill before the end of the time value of the next note to which it is assigned is not mandatory or the only manner of execution cannot be denied; yet to do this usually is in the interest of rhythmic vitality, because it necessitates an odd number of notes in the trill proper immediately preceding the stopping point and termination.

On the second quarter in bar 1 the harmony does not change as the alto part moves on; both rhythm and harmony therefore seem served best by a trill lasting the exact length of an 8th note, followed by a 16th length of main note F and the termination. The situation in bar 2 is different. Here we have a second dissonance in the suspended G of the tenor, resolved by F and E flat through seventh chord into triad harmony. The harmonic tension of the auxiliary B flat in the trill will be strengthened if we permit it to continue its dissonance with a new interval against the F of the tenor. This can be accomplished in several ways. (1) We can play the whole trill in 32nd notes; this is rhythmically too regular. (2) We could follow the suggestions of some writers that the note values of trill terminations need not be taken literally and execute trill and termination in continuous 64th notes. (3) We can take advantage of both dissonances as well as accept the 32nd note termination by continuing the oscillation for one more 64th triplet followed by 32nd note A natural and the two 32nd notes of the termination.

In this manner we get a trill faster than the notes immediately preceding it, maintaining dissonance tension as long as possible, and stopping a little before the termination. It is suggested that the same principle be

followed on the third quarter of bar 13 and the second quarter of bar 4, for similar reasons.

The main note of the *tr* on the first quarter in bar 3 is A flat, like the tenor note A flat, the third of a minor triad. The auxiliary note B flat of the trill is dissonant with bass, tenor, and first 8th alto. When the alto moves, either of the trill notes appears to produce about equal degrees of dissonance tension with this part. Therefore, a 64th note trill throughout the entire value of this quarter seems most effective in this place.

On the second quarter of bar 5 it seems most advisable to stop the 64th note oscillation on the second 8th note, since it is desirable to hear the diminished-triad harmony plainly for a moment before the G of the termination again breaks it. The same holds for the second quarter, bar 18.

For the appoggiatura on the third quarter of bar 5 equally valid harmonic arguments can be presented for execution as an 8th or a 16th note. Those on the first and second quarters of bar 6, on the other hand, should definitely be played as 16th notes for rhythmical reasons. The first auxiliary note of the trill on the second quarter in bar 6 is tied to the G of the first 8th of this quarter. Only a group of four 64th notes with a tenuto on the first tied-over one can be played recognizably in this place.

In bar 7, third quarter, the argument in favor of ending the trill proper with a 64th-note triplet group so as to reach the main note G on the third 16th note is taken from the melodic context. The eye immediately conceives the parallel motion between soprano and tenor, which continues into the next quarter against the slower contrary motion of the bass. It seems desirable to give the ear this quieting effect of parallel motion into a completely consonant main beat after the trill has prevented this effect on the first 8th note. A similar method of preserving some of the melodic effect of the unornamented soprano is recommended for the second quarter of bar 8.

In bar 10, second quarter, the termination leads upward, to the former auxiliary note of the trill. The trill here seems to function as an extended turn around the main note, A natural. This function can best be effected by continuing the 64th note oscillations uninterruptedly into the 32nd note termination.

For the trill on the second quarter, bar 15, the same reason as that presented for our solutions in bars 5 or 18 recommends stopping the trill after a group of 64th triplets on the third 16th note to give the diminished triad harmony a moment of straight sound. This place is mentioned separately because of the appoggiatura sign. On the second quarter, bar 11, we find the same situation, with an appoggiatura written out in this case, and tied to the first note of a short trill. If one assumes the different manner of notation to be intentional, the difference must be in the length of the appoggiatura in bar 15. For greatest rhythmical as well as harmonic interest a 16th appoggiatura tied to the first of a 64th note trill is suggested.

Harmonically it will make little difference whether the appoggiatura on the second quarter, bar 17, is played as a 16th or an 8th. Rhythmically,

enough unrest exists in the neighborhood to make irregularity (16th and dotted 8th) here preferable to regularity (two 8ths).

If one studies the harmonies in bar 20, one is struck by the enormous tension which is built up by all the dissonances, from 16th to 16th. Preference for dissonance alone as a criterion for the length of the trill before its termination could yield no solution, since a minimum of two parts remains dissonant in bar 20 no matter how the trill is played. Stopping the trill on the third 16th, as in bar 7 (but for opposite reasons), seems to offer the most satisfactory solution through its contrary motion of 16th notes between soprano and G-F and A natural-B flat respectively, since in each case one of the two notes is dissonant with the E flat and bass C at the same time.

The diminished seventh chord on the first note of bar 22 should be heard as such; therefore, the trill of the last quarter, bar 21, should end with a group of 64th note triplets, so as to let bar 22 start on a D in the soprano. The very last short-trill sign on the second quarter of bar 22 might have been treated above with the "short trills" even though it appears above an 8th note, the actual pulse of this very slow composition. Following Aldrich's definition of the short trill, even on this relatively long 8th note, this trill seems to function merely as an overgrown appoggiatura, making it desirable to have half of the value of the main note preserved after the trill. One group of 32nd triplets alone seems entirely satisfactory for this spot.

In closing perhaps a few words need be said about one aspect of interpretation of this work which has been almost entirely ignored in this little study, i.e. the hermeneutic approach which was emphasized so strongly by André Pirro and Albert Schweitzer, but which was used even by Philipp Spitta, and which was carried on in varying manners and degrees by such scholars as Alfred Heuss, Arnold Schering, and many others. This writer does not deny the application of the theories of affections by J. S. Bach. No doubt there are many places in his compositions, especially those with words and those based on chorales and thus connected with words, where the psychological origin or the composer's inspiration is evident, if not some times naïvely obvious. Still, the sheer beauty and power of the abstract sound of this organ chorale is so overwhelming that a musically abstract approach to the problems presented by the ornaments seems sufficient. Also, the interpreter can more easily keep subjectivity to a minimum. The writer is fully aware that, even so, he has presented individual interpretations. He wishes to challenge, and will welcome, argument.

Bas Relief

ARTHUR HOWES

In three-dimensional sculpture the artist creates figures which by their attitudes suggest graceful movement or abstract ideas, and sometimes even strong emotions. In a more limited way the same results may be achieved with figures slightly raised from the surface of a flat panel so that the third dimension (depth) is only indicated. This familiar kind of sculpture, known as Bas Relief, has its own well-developed techniques and conventions; and at least a partial understanding of them is essential to real appreciation of this specialized art form. Organ music stands in a somewhat similar relationship to other kinds of music. As the sculptor employs three elements — height, breadth, and depth — the musician combines patterns of pitch (melody, harmony), time (duration, rhythm), and intensity (volume, loudness). The organist, however, has only a limited control of the third of these elements. It is important to have a clear understanding of the exact nature of this limitation in order to make the most effective and appropriate use of our medium.

Consider the violin and its capacity for almost infinite variation in tone production. A violinist has a wide volume range subject to his instantaneous control, each change producing a subtle alteration of tone color. He can vary the pressure of the bow on the string, can draw the bow across the string more or less rapidly, can bounce the bow off the string, can articulate each note with a separate stroke of the bow or slur several together with a single stroke, and can produce all varieties and degrees of legato, non-legato and staccato. All of these devices and effects are available *within a phrase*, some even during a single note. It is therefore only natural that melodies and phrases should "come to life" when well played on a violin, as they can be given an almost human utterance.

In comparison, the organ has quite different characteristics and potentialities. It is notably weak in attack and articulation — we merely open a valve that *permits* a jet of lightly compressed air to pass across the lip of a pipe and set into vibration the air within. There is no hammer blow as in the piano, no plucking as in the harpsichord, no stroke of the bow. The organ is also deficient in dynamic flexibility. We can alter the dynamic level by changing manuals or stops, but not, ideally, in the middle of a phrase, line, or period. Contrasts are possible, but quick flexibility and gradual changes are not.

The use of expression shutters immediately suggests itself. They can be substituted for a more normal type of expression in music which is predominantly homophonic, and to a more limited degree elsewhere. It should be realized that their use does not change the tone at its source; they do not vary the energy with which the tone is *projected*. The feeling of intensity that is the result of subtle nuances produced by the violin bow or varia-

ations of breath pressure in wind instruments is not achieved by the use of organ expression. The latter cannot be made to operate effectively on just a few notes or a single note.

It might be said that organ expression shutters merely interfere with hearing the music by obstructing the passage of sound to the audience from its source. It is as though the music were gradually or suddenly removed to a greater distance, or brought back again. Contrast with the usual musical expression is emphasized by imagining other means of achieving variable distance effects. A string quartet, for example, might be seated on a platform that could be moved back and forth, off and on the stage, for decrescendo and crescendo; or the giant elevator which brings the orchestra at Radio City Music Hall up to audience level and then subsides after their overture, could be made to descend into a deep subcellar, for effects comparable to closing our expression shutters.

Probably the most perfect analogy to the use of expression pedals and shutters is the manipulation of the volume control of a radio.

In any case, we must acknowledge that organ tone is inherently passive, static, and inflexible, and that the mechanism provided for volume changes is too remote from the player and from the tone-producing elements to permit anything like the volatile "live" quality common to the music of most other instruments. A gigantic machine is interposed between the player and the music; the functioning of any machine is passive, and the possibilities for an intimate, personal kind of expression are limited.

However, it can be shown that this static quality is well suited to the performance of certain kinds of music. In polyphonic choral music and plainsong, singers often find it quite difficult to sustain tone smoothly and evenly enough to ideally realize the long phrases. They are apt carelessly or inadvertently to misuse the great flexibility of the human voice in such music. And some organ music is most effective when its lines are clearly recognizable because of the eveness with which they are sustained and the equal prominence that is given to each voice.

A phrase, a line, a melody, a rhythmic pattern all have character and some inherent dramatic effect, irrespective of any dramatic utterance that may be given to them. Composers of classical organ music (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) relied entirely upon such inherent effects, and the interest developed by contrapuntal movement, to give character to their music. The dynamic flexibility and expressiveness of modern instrumental music were not available to them and were foreign to musical thought of that period. Their compositions might be called "structures in tone," in which pattern and design are of primary importance, and whose dramatic implications are entirely dependent upon intrinsic features. Romantic and more recent composers have presupposed a number of performance "effects," and patterns of dynamic changes and nuance are essential elements of their compositions. Romantic music requires the maximum of expressiveness, demanding everything from a sudden fortissimo to the finest subtleties of shading. This is clearly the reason why the

great composers of the nineteenth century neglected the organ. It was ill suited to their purposes, because it could not be made to produce the volume changes which they sought.

Classical organ music is dependent upon a clear exposition of its lines and patterns, all of which must be recognizable for the sake of dramatic effect. It is self-evident that we would not want to minimize their impressiveness by muffling them or confuse their relationships by making them "come and go." Contrapuntal texture always poses the problem of where to apply expression, anyway. Phrases in the different voices overlap (as in a fugue), so that the moment of climax in one does not coincide with that in another. There is no gain in deferring to the requirement of one voice at the expense of another.

The tone of some organs is so thick and opaque that this music is not permitted to speak with its full eloquence, so that organists feel they must add interest by frequently changing the sound and volume; but this usually only compounds the abuse of clothing the composer's musical ideas in such unsuitable garments. Changes in registration must be introduced judiciously, only in accordance with structural outlines; and many chorale preludes require no changes of any kind.

In spite of all that has been said above about the organ's limitations, in an instrument of good tone and action we do have available to us the means of enlivening our performance of real organ music. It is possible to give point and shape to phrases by carefully controlling the duration of every note. The organ is a sustained-tone instrument; legato playing is normal to it and is one of its most beautiful effects. But constant legato playing not only is monotonous but also deprives melodies and phrases of the character and vitality that can be given to them by accents of duration and by punctuating each voice with slight breaks in the legato to indicate sentences, phrases and lesser significant note groupings. The long lines of polyphony must be separated into patterns that will assume recognizable identity in the mind of the listener. It would require extra effort to comprehend the meaning of a long paragraph written without punctuation or spoken without pause, and a seemingly endless succession of notes is equally unintelligible. Although phrasing was seldom marked by Bach and the other great organ composers, it is possible to ascertain the patterns and note groupings by various means. Obvious units would be elements of a cantus firmus or fugue subject. A pattern that is treated imitatively or sequentially is easy to recognize. Bach employs some melodic figures so frequently that they may be regarded as clichés, such as the upward leap of a fourth and the downward leap of a seventh in melodic cadences. The former usually begins a phrase and the latter is often simply a two-note phrase. Other groupings emerge as a result of careful study of each part in order to learn where its points of intensity and repose are, to find out where it seems to be going at all times. Play each voice separately in order to become fully aware of its shape and form. It is even more valuable for this purpose to sing them when possible. You will find yourself emphasizing

with your voice certain notes that require accentuation, and these points of intensity must be shown by other means in your playing. Changes of direction, long and short notes, syncopations, retardations, cadences, and dissonances are all factors to be considered.

The following typical cases are suggested as situations in which non-legato touches may be employed with good effect and some examples in Bach's works are cited. It is surprising how many passages of music fall into these classifications and may be enlivened by non-legato playing.

1. Shorten the last note of each phrase pattern or slurred group so that its ending may be recognized and the following phrase given a fresh beginning.

2. Shorten a note which is to be repeated so that its repetition is given a clearly audible attack.

As a corollary of this principle, octave leaps may be treated as repeated notes and separated, as in the right hand part of bar 3 in the E Flat Fugue, but especially when they occur in an inner or pedal part where they seem like a continuation of the same note unless markedly separated. They should, however, sometimes be played legato when they appear as the beginning of a melodic pattern, as in measures 16 (right hand part) and 17 (pedal) in the first movement of the First Trio Sonata.

3. Leaps along chordal lines — two or more leaps in the same direction — may be detached, as in the opening measure of the First Trio Sonata. Melodic movement to the next adjacent note in the scale affords the maximum of contrast, as the tonalities would be dissonant if sounded together, and is therefore "strong." Leaps involving tones that would produce consonance if struck together are "weak," so that they need the emphasis of an individual attack on each note in order to make themselves heard in the web of counterpoint. Conjunct motion should generally be legato, disjunct motion non-legato.

4. In pieces or passages consisting entirely or predominantly of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, or any other combination of next adjacent time values, all the eighth notes (or longer of the two) may be played non-legato. A good example is the chorale prelude "Now Rejoice, Ye Christian Men." Application of this principle not only provides rhythmic vitality but makes it easier for the listener to follow the movement of each voice. This method may also be applied to sixteenths and eighths occuring in the same voice, as in the subject and countersubject in the great G Minor Fugue.

5. A note which is going to be suspended should be given a strong attack by abbreviating the preceding note. This has the effect of directing attention to it and its extra length; it intensifies the rhythm of syncopation, especially in a series of syncopated notes. The main subject of the E Flat Fugue contains a good example, followed by the two syncopated notes in the right hand part of bar 5. The suspensions in the countersubject of the great G Minor Fugue make the exposition livelier if given separate attacks.

6. In a uninterrupted series of dotted eighths and sixteenths, the time of the dots may be treated as rests, so that each sixteenth is slurred to the following eighth. An example is the left hand part of the chorale prelude "This Is The Brightest Day of Days," in the Little Organ Book.

7. In groups of eighths or sixteenths, the last two of each group may be shortened in order to give emphasis to the first note of the following group. Examples are found in number 6 of the Schübler Choral Preludes, "Thou Art Coming Now, O Jesus," where both eighths and sixteenths may be treated this way.

8. Sixteenths which are tied to preceding long notes may often be treated as rests, as in such cases the melodic pattern seems obviously to begin with the second sixteenth.

Although the first two of the above should probably be regarded as inviolable rules, the remainder are more like musical conventions which are in effect most of the time but may be suspended with sufficient justification. Non-legato notes should generally be held for one half of their written length or shortened by a recognizable rhythmic portion of their entire length.

Many passages fall into more than one classification. When the phrasing requirements of both coincide and corroborate each other, all well and good. When they do not, the most careful judgment is necessary to decide which convention is applicable. Many such conflicts do occur, most notable being the frequent upward leap of a fourth to a note which is suspended. In such a case the writer feels that melodic values would be set above rhythmic emphasis and the leap should be played legato, thus depriving the syncopated note of the special attack to which it is usually entitled. Otherwise, the first and lower note of the fourth would sometimes be left alone without any associates in legato, like a single-note phrase.

Application of these rules and conventions will not only bring out intelligible patterns and create emphasis through the illusion of accent, but will appreciably clarify the contrapuntal texture, as sustained notes may be heard more clearly in the brief moments of silence in other voices.

If anyone should attempt to lift Della Robbia's charming figures out of their panels and reproduce them in full three-dimensional sculpture the result would be very different and highly inartistic. Composers in the Golden Age of organ music wrote music for the organ of their day, subject to and in a high degree dependent upon the limitations of their instruments. Let us not therefore destroy its inherent virtues by removing it from the frame that gives it character and from whence its virtues spring. Rather, let us further refine our knowledge of the techniques that may be legitimately practiced within the natural limitations of our medium.

GEORGE LUHRMANN of Cedar Brook, New Jersey, winner of the Andover Organ Prize and of the Westinghouse Talent Search, student carilloneur of 1951-1952, and now a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, here practices in the Cochran Chapel. His pet, a 9-foot boa constrictor, seems to possess some musical discrimination. The tightly woven counterpoint of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in F minor never failed to provoke an affectionate gesture of appreciation, as shown.

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The Pedal Organ

ERNEST WHITE

The former articles in this series have covered the usual manual divisions. In them we drew attention to the multiple pitch centers of the divisions within the instrument. The Great is fundamentally based on the 16′ level, the Swell on 8′, and the Positiv on 4′.

This does not mean that the Great must constantly produce 16′ tone, but rather that the size and character of the other stops is determined with reference to that pitch. When all stops are sounded together, there is a cohesive tone from the 16′ stop upward as high as the structure is allowed to go. The Great also has 8′ and 4′ levels in harmonics; but in thinking about the Pedal organ we must keep in mind these fundamental pitch relations, for the Pedal organ is the bass to the whole instrument.

The Pedal clavier originally pulled down the bass keys of the manuals. In a well-developed organ this would produce an 8′ line as the Pedal for the Swell, and a 16′ line as the Pedal for the Great. This double axis makes a similar appearance in the orchestra. The Cello (8′) is the bass of the string family, yet the Double Bass (16′) is a more grave version of the bass. The true bass is still 8′ pitch, even though there is as well a sub octave for the effect of gravity.

Following this line of thought, it is quite easy to justify the 32′ level provided in large instruments. If the 16′ level is properly developed in the manuals, the lower level is then required as a double of that pitch, yet it is truly a doubling and not an essential pitch.

As in the manuals, having set the lowest lines as foundations, the harmonic structure has to be built up in octave levels. It is a matter of real regret that this era of high prices has retarded the growth of, and the understanding of, adequate Pedal organs. During the depression years, we were well on the way to providing independent Pedal divisions — yet, time after time, players who had such riches at their command relied upon Pedal couplers and a few of the 16′ stops through sheer mental laziness. They had learned to play on organs with inadequate Pedals; and so they continued to play better organs by previously learned rules, instead of using their ears.

Our borrowed and extended Pedals are a far cry from the pull-downs of early organs; yet unless we replace borrows, extensions, and couplers with pipes, we will never achieve a vital and independent Pedal part. The desired end is to have tone in each section that is distinctive; then with a minimum of coupling we can produce variety in unity, and enjoy a tone with some depth and perspective.

student carillonneur of 1951-1952, and now a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, here practices in the Cochran

and Fugue in F minor never failed to provoke an affectionate gesture of appreciation, as shown.

Busman's Holiday

When the late Bishop Francis Marion Taitt, of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, visited a parish for confirmation, he used to conclude the ceremony with a special address to the confirmation class, enjoining them to a life of steadfastness in devotion. After that, he ascended the pulpit and delivered his regular sermon to the congregation. A large class seemed to require somewhat more exhortation than a small one; and, again, the large congregation attracted by his annual visit would sometimes stir his eloquence to the point where the sermon would extend beyond anticipated length. It is understandable, therefore, that he should have occasion to tell a story about himself, approximately as follows:

"In the many years of my long ministry, I have become somewhat accustomed to seeing members of congregations glance anxiously at their watches while I am preaching; but I must admit that even now I cannot continue my sermon unperturbed when I see a man take out his watch, look at it, and then hold it to his ear to see if it is still running."

Most clergy seem to know that they may be "clocked" if they run over appointed time limits, and practice suitable restraint, although in passing it might be worth while to mention "The Great Sermon Handicap," by P. G. Wodehouse, a story that most organists would enjoy. Organists themselves, however, are unafraid of being clocked; and some of them seem to be blissfully unaware of the passage of time at certain moments on Sundays.

A member of a congregation cannot easily time various parts of a church service without embarrassment. The experience that finally instigated our surreptitious clock-watching was the frequency with which we heard sung "Amens" prolonged to disproportionate length.

In the first instance, a common-metre hymn tune, St. Flavian, taken at a reasonable (but not uniformly maintained) tempo, was found to require from 18 to 20 seconds for each verse. The "Amen" finally ended *11* seconds after the last note of the last verse! More than half the time required for performance of the entire tune was thus consumed by the mere formality which custom requires after the singing of most hymns. A few weeks later, we happened to visit a church in which the organist had the habit of prolonging the last chord of each verse far beyond its written length. It seemed likely that he was due to set some sort of record. So, with watch in hand, we awaited the solemn ending. Believe it or not, from the beginning of the final chord to the end of the "Amen" took exactly 20 seconds!

Perhaps these musicians were trying to earn credit for rediscovering the lost chord of that "Great Amen," which, according to Sullivan, is to be heard throughout eternity, by prolonging the old familiar IV-I progression to a *near* eternity. In any case, the effect was to suggest that they had been seated too many days at the organ, were very weary, and everyone else was ill at ease.

We have been unable to think of any justification — artistic, liturgical, or practical — for such dawdling. This extra ultimate cadence may be given a feeling of finality by taking it in strict time with only a *slight* slowing of the tempo at which the hymn has been sung, giving each note of the "Amen" 2 beats, or 3 beats if the tune has 3 beats in a measure. The tempo of the entire hymn must be felt right through the "Amen," even if it is slightly retarded.

A good example is Croft's common-metre tune St. Anne, for "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." The choice of tempo for this or any hymn should be based, not only on the inherent character of the music and words (lively, meditative, vigorous, broadly dignified), but also upon such practical matters as the difficulty of traversing its most rapid notes and of singing long phrases in a single breath, the size and reverberation period of the church auditorium, the numerical and tonal strength of choir and congregation, and the size and character of the organ. Let us assume you have found that your congregation can sing this particular hymn well and with good effect at 80 beats to the minute. It would require from 24 to 25 seconds for each verse at this tempo. Allowing a maximum of 2 seconds' pause before the "Amen," a much retarded beat would still enable all to sing a satisfyingly final "Amen" in 4, or at most 5, seconds, so that the entire ending is concluded in no more than 6 seconds after the last word is sung.

Another one of the odd foibles of ministers and church musicians is the custom of singing "Amens" at the end of prayers which are pronounced in an ordinary speaking voice. The absurdity of this practice is apparent to anyone who is not so accustomed to it that he does not think about it. A "collect" is supposed to be the collected petitions of all the people, spoken in their behalf by the minister, to which the people signify their assent and agreement by the word *amen*, "so be it." It is inappropriate to take time to draw stops, signal the choir to come in, and then stretch out a long plagal cadence, ornamented with crescendo and diminuendo, as long as human breath can sustain it. Nor should the assent to a collect be given in any tone or manner of speaking other than that in which the prayer itself is pronounced. If a bridegroom should say "I do" by giving his bride 10 or 15 seconds of Handelian vocalization, or even just a prolongation of the familiar *fa-mi*, such antics would be regarded as inappropriate comedy. Singing an Amen after a spoken collect, or singing any of the responses to spoken versicles, is exactly similar.

All of the examples we hear, and of which we now complain, seem to us to be clear examples of the tail wagging the dog. One possible explanation for the survival of such illogical practices in church services is that the general regard for the sanctity of the Church induces in most churchgoers a sort of unconscious belief in the semi-divine origin of anything that occurs in church, and they listen uncritically. This uncritical attitude is often an impediment to progress; on the other hand, it may be the means of salvation to some. We have already said enough — perhaps too much. *Amen.*

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★ ★ INSTITUTE

● As this issue goes to press, word has been received that the national winner of the American Guild of Organists young artist contest is Miss Dorothy Young of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who was a student at the Organ Institute in the 1951 summer session. She competed with regional winners Ruth Oberholtzer of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, and Will Headlee of Asheville, North Carolina, both of whom also attended the 1951 summer session. Bob Whitley, who won the national contest in 1950, was an Organ Institute student in 1949. That makes two in a row for the Organ Institute and for Miss Mildred Andrews, professor of Organ at the University of Oklahoma, who is the organ teacher of both Miss Young and Mr. Whitley, and who will herself attend the Organ Institute summer session at Andover this year.

● The Hammond Concert Model to be used by students at the Andover Summer Session was installed through the courtesy of Mr. Jerome F. Murphy, Jr., of M. Steinert & Sons, Boston, exclusive Hammond dealers in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

● Many inquirers want to know if the course given at the Organ Institute Summer Sessions is "too advanced" for them, what the entrance requirements are, or whether the writers would be "eligible" to attend. We are glad

BRIEFS ★ ★ ★

to be able to say that the instruction and curriculum are arranged so as to be profitable to all students at whatever degree of advancement they may have reached. Each studies the pieces most suitable for him and learns much from hearing the other pieces played and discussed. Lectures by the faculty have wide general application; theory and practice are brought together in criticism of individual performance, either in class or in private lessons. It is not uncommon for teachers and pupils to take the course together.

• Dr. M. A. Vente, the distinguished Dutch author of "My View of Organ Building Today," is an organ architect, designer of scales, who is willing to give advice to American organ builders and organists. His address is Stolberglaan 17, Utrecht, Netherlands.

His article is rich in valuable and important content. We hope, however, that he may have an opportunity to reappraise us and our organs in a personal visit to the United States.

We are very grateful to Mr. Jacob A. Vandenbergh, a Dutch-American of Andover, who very kindly translated Dr. Vente's article for us.

• Klaus Speer, who wrote the article on ornamentation in Bach, was a pupil of Fritz Heitmann in Germany, and has quickly made a place for himself in this

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● Readers who are interested in following up Ray Berry's challenging article on acoustics will find much valuable information in a highly readable book, *Science and Music*, by Sir James Jeans, now in its seventh printing.

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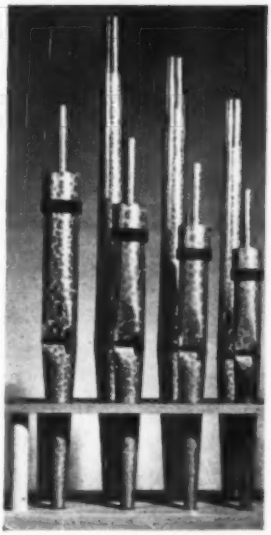

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